

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 has been amended as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for surface contouring of a three-dimensional image of ~~a subject~~ an object comprising the steps of:
placing a first set of planes through the three-dimensional image;
determining contours that are imaged in each of the planes of the first set of planes
and that are associated with a surface contour of the three-dimensional
image; and
~~merging~~ combining the contours determined in each plane of the first set of planes
into a surface grid associated with the surface contour of the three-dimensional image.

2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the planes of the first set of planes intersect in a first straight line.

Claim 3 has been amended as follows:

3. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein ~~that~~ the first straight line proceeds substantially through the geometric center of the three-dimensional image.

4. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 3 wherein said three-dimensional image is formed by a volume data set and comprising filtering said volume dataset to determine the geometric center of the three-dimensional image.

Claim 5 has been amended as follows:

5. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 3 comprising ~~the~~ automatically determining the geometric center of the three-dimensional image.

Claim 6 has been amended as follows:

6. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 3 comprising specifying the image contents of each plane of the first set of planes in Cartesian coordinates and, for each plane, determining the contours in that plane by: implementing applying a coordinate transformation to polar coordinates approximately with regard to the geometric center of the three-dimensional image, and thereby unwinding the contour; and determining the contour in the transformed plane.

Claim 7 has been amended as follows:

7. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 6 comprising determining the contour in the transformed plane, by, ~~after minimal changes, making a contour continuation~~ criteria in the direction of the angular coordinate of the polar ~~coordinate~~ coordinator with an optimization for minimizing accumulated point-to-point changes.

8. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 6 comprising improving the contour in the transformed plane by dynamic optimization.

Claim 9 has been amended as follows:

9. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 2 wherein the set of planes is a first set of planes and wherein said straight line is a first straight line, and comprising:

placing a second set of planes through the three-dimensional image with the planes of the second set of planes intersecting in a second straight line;

orienting said second straight line perpendicularly to said first straight line;

determining the contours that are imaged in each of the planes of the second set of planes and that are associated with the surface contour of the three-dimensional image; and
together with the contours determined in each plane of the first set of planes, ~~merging~~ combining the contours determined in each plane of the second set of planes into the surface grid associated with the surface contour of the three-dimensional image.

Claim 10 has been cancelled.

10. (Cancelled)

Claim 11 has been amended as follows:

11. (Currently Amended) Method according to claim ~~40~~ 9 wherein the first straight line and the second straight line intersect in the geometric center of the three-dimensional image.

Claim 12 has been amended as follows:

12. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 comprising acquiring the three-dimensional image with a medical ~~technology~~ imaging device, as representation of a part of a living organism ~~as~~ of said subject.

13. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 12 comprising determining the geometric center of the three-dimensional image during a navigation-guided treatment of the living organism.